Wadie Jwaideh, 84
JULY 1, 1916—MARCH 9, 2001
Wadie Jwaideh, 84, of Bloomington died March 9, 2001, at Stanford University Hospital in Palo Alto, Calif.

Wadie Jwaideh, the son of Elias Jwaideh and Miriam Namenee Sinar, was born in Basrah, Iraq, on July 1, 1916. He attended American schools in Basrah and later in Baghdad. He received the degree of Licentiate in Law from the Iraq Law College of the University of Baghdad in 1942. While a law student, he worked as translator for the Iraq Ministry of Defense and as legal advisor and translator for the Iraq Ministry of Interior.

During World War II, Dr. Jwaideh was appointed Inspector of Supply for the Northern Provinces, with responsibility for allocating food and other supplies throughout five of Iraq’s 14 provinces. After the war, he became legal advisor and Inspector of Antiquities for the Iraq Museum.

Wadie Jwaideh was known in Iraq for his extensive knowledge of Russian literature. He wrote a series of articles on this and on other topics that were published in Iraqi scholarly and literary journals. He was awarded a British Council graduate fellowship to study literature at Cambridge University, but when this was delayed because of the war, he decided to come to the United States.

He was granted a fellowship to attend the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, where he received his Ph.D. degree in 1960. While writing his dissertation, he served as lecturer in Arabic for the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

During his graduate studies, Mr. Jwaideh took time off to translate and annotate the six introductory chapters of Yaqut’s Mu`jam al-Buldan (The Dictionary of Countries) for the George C. Kaiser Foundation of Washington D.C. This work, written by a famous 13th-century scholar, contains geographical, historical, legal, military and cultural information on all the countries known to the Arabs at that time. The translation, with a comprehensive introduction and extensive annotations by Dr. Jwaideh, was published by the E.J. Brill Company of Leiden in 1960. It received high praise from leading scholars in Arabic and Islamic studies throughout the world, including Sir Hamilton Gibb and Professor Helmut Ritter.

His 500-page doctoral dissertation entitled A History of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement is the most comprehensive study ever made on the Kurdish question, and established him as one of the world’s leading experts on the Kurds. This work was translated into Turkish and published in Istanbul in 1999.

Dr. Jwaideh joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1960, and became founder and chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures and Professor of History until he retired in 1985. He also taught several courses in the Department of Political Science and Comparative Literature.

In 1972, Professor Jwaideh was given the Lieber Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching. A number of his colleagues and former students contributed articles for a Festschrift in his honor, entitled Islamic and Middle Eastern Societies, which was published in 1987. The annual Wadie Jwaideh Distinguished Lecture Series in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies is named after him. Under his leadership, Indiana University became a nationally and internationally known center for the study of Arabic and Islamic studies until he retired in the mid-1980s.

After his retirement from Indiana University, he accepted an appointment as adjunct professor of history at the University of California at San Diego, where he taught until 1990.

During the Iran hostage crisis, Dr. Jwaideh was invited to Washington, D.C., to meet with President Jimmy Carter. He was invited to participate in the inauguration ceremonies of several new universities in the Arab world, including the University of Kuwait and the University of the United Arab Emirates. In addition to his Yaqut translation and his monumental work on the Kurds, his publications include a number of articles and review articles and an article on al-Idrissi published in the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

His survivors include his wife of more than 50 years, Alice Reid Jwaideh; his daughters, Dar Jaideh of Davis, Calif., and Layl Jwaideh of Palo Alto, Calif.; his sister, Professor Albertine Jwaideh of Toronto, Ca.; and three grandsons, Alex Jwaideh-Khan, Devon Pleasants and Derek Pleasants.

He was preceded in death by his two brothers, Abdul Massih Jwaideh and Dr. Zuhair Jwaideh, and his sister, Rose Jwaideh.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday at 1 p.m. at St. Paul’s Catholic Center, 1413 E. 17th St., with Father Dan Atkins officiating, and commitment service will be at Valhalla Memory Gardens. All are invited to return to St. Paul’s (Higgins Hall, downstairs) for a reception following the services.

Friends may call 6-8 p.m. Friday at Allen Funeral Home.

Because of Professor Jwaideh’s deep distress about the plight of the Iraqi people as a result of U.S. sanctions, the family suggests that gifts in his memory may be made to Voices in the Wilderness Iraqi Relief Fund, which provides urgently needed food and medical supplies directly to Iraqi children and their families. The address is 1460 W. Carmen Ave., Chicago, IL 60640.